



Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member

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CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON DENIED RIGHT TO TESTIFY AT HEARING

WASHINGTON, DC—Congressman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, was informed yesterday by the Republican Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee that he could not testify at Wednesday's Committee hearing, "Eco-terrorism specifically examining the Earth Liberation Front ("ELF") and the Animal Liberation Front ("ALF")."

In what is believed to be a first, a Member of Congress has not been granted permission to testify when he has formally requested to do so. The Committee, which is chaired by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) claimed that issues of domestic terrorism are not within that Committee's jurisdiction, although it is charged with overseeing the nation's critical infrastructure.

Congressman Thompson was prepared to deliver remarks based upon a report released last month by the Democratic Staff of the House Homeland Security Committee. The report entitled, "10 Years After the Oklahoma City Bombing: the Department of Homeland Security Must Do More to Fight Right-Wing Terrorists," examined recent news reports that the Department had not included all domestic terror threats in the threat/vulnerability assessment section of its long-range budget planning document. Specifically, the document did not address the domestic threat posed by right-wing terrorists such as Timothy McVeigh and abortion clinic bombers such as Eric Rudolph. The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, the 1996 Olympic Park bombing in Atlanta, and a vast majority of abortion clinic bombings have been claimed by right-wing extremist groups. The report also recommends the Department develop a mechanism to ensure threat assessments conducted within the Department are given serious consideration since domestic terror threats to our critical infrastructure, such as buildings, bridges, and power plants come from several points.

"Any serious discussion about domestic terrorism must necessarily include dangerous right-wing groups including extremists such as white supremacists, anti-abortionists, and militiamen like Timothy McVeigh," said Rep. Thompson. "I had hoped to highlight the broad spectrum of threats against the entire country.

"While eco-terrorism is certainly one type of threat to our critical infrastructure, it is not the only one--or even the most deadly one," Thompson added. "I wanted to encourage a serious discussion before the committee that oversees the protection of our Federal buildings, roads, and bridges. I had hoped Chairman Inhofe was interested in a full vetting of this issue, too."

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